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ABSTRACT

This paper offers a strategy for how women faculty members can change their behaviors in order to enhance their own careers in higher education. The paper opens by describing three types of issues that may hinder the advancement of women while noting that this guide addresses primarily the psychological aspects. Following this introduction seven general recommendations are listed which are: (1) being active on one's own behalf; (2) developing a strategy to guide progress over 5 years; (3) seeking information and advice; (4) keeping careful records; (5) working on more than one project at a time; (6) actively seeking professional feedback; and (7) developing a mentor and network of contacts. Following sections discuss the specific strategies in detail from being knowledgeable about institutional policies and regulations to networking and mentoring. A discussion of negotiating notes how often it is a part of professional dealings and suggests strategies for handling different situations. Handling discrimination is addressed including how to pick battles, controlling emotional responses to discrimination, and the use of humor. Personal presentation and questions of self-confidence are also discussed including: how to promote oneself, how to handle sexual harassment, other sexual issues, interviews, working the system, and relationships with students. Nineteen notes and 20 references are included. (JB)

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SUCCESS AND SURVIVAL STRATEGIES FOR WOMEN FACULTY MEMBERS

by Bernice Resnick Sandler

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Success and Survival Strategies for Women Faculty Members

by Bernice Resnick Sandler

Despite much progress in academe over the last twenty years, some patterns hardly have changed at all. On virtually every college and university faculty, the higher the rank, the fewer the women. The more prestigious the institution, the field, or the department, the fewer the women. At every rank, in every type of institution, in every field, women faculty members on the whole earn less than men, even when factors such as age, quality of degree preparation, years of experience, and publications are taken into account. Women are less likely to receive tenure, and it takes them longer to get it.

Many explanations have been given as to why women do not progress as far or as fast as men, although it is beyond our scope to explore the reasons here in detail. Generally, however, they fall into three categories: structural, psychological, and sociological.

The structural explanation emphasizes the nature of the work environment. Characteristics of the organizational situation, rather than inner traits or skills of women faculty members, are viewed as primary determinants of how women function on the job. For example, women with children are more likely to spend a greater proportion of their time on parenting than men. Therefore, an institution that makes no allowance for child rearing when a woman has parental responsibilities and is also preparing for tenure presents structural barriers to women's advancement, even though the institution appears to treat men and women alike. Many people believe that structural change—especially in terms of organization, policies, and practices—is essential for equity to develop.

The psychological explanation focuses on the individual. It suggests that for a variety of reasons many women lack skills and traits necessary to compete successfully. This explanation assumes that if women are taught certain skills such as how to speak assertively, how to "dress for success," and how to handle a budget they will be successful. The burden of change is on women rather than the institution, because this person-centered explanation implies that to a large degree, women are misfits and need to adopt organizational behavior that is essentially male. Apart from the obvious—that women are not men—the supposition is that the existing structure is the "right" one and therefore does not need to change and that male career patterns (such as no work interruptions for family matters) are the only acceptable norm.

The third explanation focuses on the social barriers—primarily how men relate to women—and includes a wide range of behaviors such as discrimination, stereotyping, and the discomfort that each gender may feel with the other. Certainly in our society men have been socialized to be dominant over women, and this translates into innumerable social barriers for women. Men (and women) may expect women to be passive, thus creating self-fulfilling prophecies. Women may be excluded from informal contact and thus learn less about the informal politics of a department or professional opportunities. Stereotypes may lead to inaccurate perceptions and expectations concerning women. Some men may make sexual jokes and innuendos and engage in sexual harassment. Such behaviors often make women uncomfortable and angry; the emotional energy and time that women expend, in turn, may also affect their productivity.

These three explanations obviously are intertwined; none by itself is sufficient to explain the difficulties women face in the workplace. All three explanations contribute to our understanding of what happens on the job; all three need to be addressed if workplaces are to become more equitable.

This paper focuses only on one strategy—how to help women change their behaviors in order to enhance their own careers. It does not deal with the structure of the workplace or with the societal issues that make it difficult for women to participate actively and succeed in the workplace, although it does include some strategies for responding to differential treatment. Thus the paper is an incomplete blueprint for equity. However much a woman attends to factors that might enhance her chances of moving ahead, many other major factors over which she may have little or no control may outweigh her own efforts, no matter how extensive and appropriate they might be.

Women who are also members of a minority group are even more likely to have difficulty in the workplace. Often they face "double discrimination": once for being female, once for being racially or ethnically different. Minority women may be even more isolated from their colleagues and face hostility from men (both white and minority) as well as from white women. They are more likely to be seen as "tokens," regardless of their qualifications.[1] The unintentionally derogatory description—"qualified minority woman"—implies that although minority women are generally not qualified, this particular woman is an exception to the rule.

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"Outsiders" such as all women and people of color are likely to suffer from inattention and overattention. In many instances, minority women are more likely to be singled out and judged according to stereotyped expectations than other women so that differences between women of color and white women may be exaggerated.

Because of their small numbers on most campuses, minority women may have heightened visibility and thus may be subject to more scrutiny than their minority male or female colleagues. Minority women may receive less feedback about their work than white women or minority men, and thus they may need to seek out feedback more actively than other women. Indeed, minority women generally have to work harder than majority women to survive in academe.

I have included a wide array of strategies so that individual women may select those they find most helpful. Not all of this advice is applicable or useful for everyone. Some women may disagree or feel uncomfortable with a specific strategy. Some strategies may not be appropriate for particular situations; some strategies may need to be changed.

This list of strategies is not inclusive; many persons will want to add their own. These strategies come not only from people who have written on the subject but also from hundreds of conversations I have had with women and men over many years as I have traveled from campus to campus. Many have been tested on campuses I have visited where women and men have questioned, clarified, and sharpened these strategies.

Not included are many strategies that are important to both men and women; instead, I have focused on those that are particularly important for women or may not have been widely discussed elsewhere. Thus, this paper should be read in conjunction with other guides or books about "success," some of which are listed at the end of this paper.

Lastly, it is important to keep in mind that although not every woman wants to get "to the top," the information in this paper is not only helpful in planning where you want to be but also in staying there. Unlike men, for whom success often means fame and power, for many women success means survival. Whatever your goals, I hope this paper will help you in some way.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The SUNY–Albany Women's Concerns Committee lists four basic recommendations for women faculty members:

- ☐ Be active and energetic on your own behalf. Do not assume that anyone else will look out for your interests.
- ☐ Develop a strategy now that will guide your progress as a scholar, teacher, and colleague over the next five years.
- ☐ Seek information, advice, and assistance in developing, implementing, and revising your strategy. Do not make major decisions without talking to other people.
- ☐ Keep careful records of your activities as a scholar, teacher, and colleague. Begin immediately to create a tenure file.

Here are some other general strategies.

- ☐ Work on more than one project at a time.
- ☐ Actively seek feedback from colleagues, senior faculty members, and your department chair. Do not assume that no feedback means there are no problems. Because women are less likely to get feedback than men, and because evaluations from male supervisors may not be given until something is wrong, it is important to deliberately seek it so that problems, if any, can be identified and dealt with. If you do not get a formal evaluation at the end of your first year, ask for one. Your evaluation should be performed annually and put in writing. If your evaluation is negative and you believe the comments are legitimate, you should discuss them with your chair to plan what you need to do to improve. If you believe any negative comment is not accurate, provide written materials to refute the evaluation.
- ☐ Talk with women of different races, from different classes, with different sexual orientations, from different places in the academic hierarchy. Find a mentor. Get feedback, strategies. Develop your own networks. Find out what others have done in individual instances or what women's groups or minority groups have done to effect change. (Some of these subjects are discussed in greater detail throughout this paper.)

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW AND HOW TO LEARN IT

Most of the formal knowledge you'll need is contained in documents such as the faculty handbook. Be sure to obtain the written policies about tenure, promotion, and retention.

Ask for a written job description if you do not already have one. If there is none, write it yourself and ask your chair if the description is accurate. When agreed upon, have the chair sign it. Another technique is to send your description along with a note to the chair saying, "If I have not heard from you by (date), I will assume that you agree with this."

Learn what services are available from the department and from the institution, such as clerical help, release time, research assistance, and financial support. Learn what sources of help for research are available outside the institution.

Check out fellowship and grant directories such as the *Foundation Directory*. Check with friends and colleagues for other sources. Some professional organizations have lists of grant support. Check sources of support on existing research in your field.

See the grants officer at your institution if your institution has one. That person can help with sources, check with foundations and agencies about the appropriateness of your proposal, and also help you develop your proposal.

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In addition to written information, there is a good deal of unwritten information that is essential. Every institution and department has its own culture. There are unwritten organizational structures, rules, and customs, and women have less opportunity to learn what these are. Some examples are: Who are the powerful people in the department? In the division? What are the informal rules? How much deference does one show to the people in power? Which behaviors are valued and which are not? (The purpose of this question is not necessarily to force conformity but to help you make an informed choice about how you want to behave.)

A lot of information about the tenure process is not written down. Allies are needed on the tenure committee; how does one obtain them? Doing excellent research may not be enough; it is helpful to know in which publications to publish, which to avoid, what conferences to attend, and so forth.

How can women get this sort of information? The best way is to talk to people who have been involved in the process. Talk with as many people as possible. "What would you have liked to know when you began the tenure process?" is a good question.

Talk regularly with your department chair in order to gain information about the department, the tenure process, and how you are fitting into the department. Learn from others which institutional and departmental committees are valued by your department so that you can try to serve on those. Talk to people about sources for research support that may not be generally known or available.

NETWORKING AND MENTORING

Mentors and informal networks can provide information, strategies, support, and opportunities to meet others who can provide the same things. Until recent years, most writers examining mentoring and success believed that having a mentor was essential to moving up. Mentoring was described as a long-term relationship where one person (usually a man) took another person (usually another man) under his wing and taught him the informal ropes of the profession, supported and encouraged him, introduced him to important people, and opened doors for his advancement.

Women students and faculty members as well as other relative newcomers in academe often have difficulty in obtaining a mentor. In part, because of their outsider status, women may have less knowledge of how the system operates and what steps to take to find a mentor. Additionally, to the extent that most people are more comfortable with people like themselves, some men may be uncomfortable mentoring women. They may also believe that women are not likely to stay in their profession long enough to be worthy of the mentor's involvement or that women are not capable of exceptional work and achievements and therefore are not worthy of sponsorship.

Women often turn to other women for mentoring. Unfortunately, there are not enough women in most departments and fields to provide the intensive experiences needed for successful mentoring as traditionally conceived. As a result, many women have focused on networking with both men and women. Traditional mentoring involves a close relationship; networking is more casual. But one can gain similar kinds of help from both: some more easily from mentoring, others more easily from networking. Most people need both in order to survive: strong ties and weak ties. Networking can be defined, in a sense, as providing short-term, multiple mentors.

Many of the following suggestions are appropriate for both networking and mentoring.[3]

Mentors and others who can help do not need to be professionally well-established. Colleagues at the same level—colleagues in other departments, fields, and institutions—can also be helpful. Get to know clerical workers and respect them as you would professional colleagues. Not only can they be helpful in getting things done, but they also can be another valuable source of information about informal structure.

Talk with people at all levels: your department chair, senior professors, junior faculty members in your own department, women colleagues in other departments, people with research interests similar to yours in other departments, people in your discipline at other institutions. Take the initiative in seeking out these people by calling and visiting them.

If you are seeking a mentor, don't wait passively until you are asked. Introduce yourself. Ask a colleague to mention your work to a potential mentor. Maximize informal contacts with the person(s) you would like to have as a mentor by working together, serving on the same committee or task force, sharing information that might be helpful, attending the same meetings. One way to begin might be asking for help regarding the strengths and weaknesses of your work. Always express appreciation for advice and criticism.

Don't limit your search for mentors to your own institution. If appropriate, send a paper(s) with a letter asking for comments to persons who work in the same areas, whose work you have cited (or have cited you), who you met at a conference, or who have been recommended to you by mentors at your home institution. (But don't send book-length manuscripts without prior encouragement.) Invite your potential mentor to be a guest lecturer in your class or other group. Productive researchers, among other things, maintain regular and close contact (for example, telephone calls) with colleagues on and off campus who conduct research on similar topics.[4]

The SUNY–Albany Women's Concern's Committee suggests that you think of your own informal network as a personal "advisory committee."

Develop a "career cooperative" or other mutual support group. This is not a therapy group but focuses on institutional and professional issues.[5]

Keep in mind that relationships take time and effort.

Join your professional organization and offer to work on

committees. Join caucuses and commissions in your professional organization that deal with women's and/or minority issues.

Keep in mind that networking and mentoring are two-way streets. Many women underestimate the amount of knowledge they have about the academic system or about their organization, the contacts they have, the avenues they can use to help someone else. You don't have to be at the top of the heap to be a mentor. You, too, can provide information, strategies, support, and opportunities to help other people and expand their networks.

NEGOTIATING

Negotiating, although we often do not call it that, takes place at many points in an academic career. Asking about the terms of a job offer or about changing the conditions of your work, whether for a change in salary or obtaining additional space, all involve negotiating. Often women are uncomfortable with negotiating, and it is sometimes helpful to talk about this with other people if you are uncomfortable about it.

Be specific about what you want. You probably have the most power to negotiate at the time of a job offer. For example, if there is a chance that you might get a research assistant, this is the time to ask for one, rather than hope that once you are settled you will be able to work things out.

Talk to others about what they would have liked to have asked for had they known more (such as parts of the benefit package, travel to professional meetings, research support, teaching load, sabbaticals, office space, equipment, and mortgage assistance from the institution).

Whether negotiating a job offer, a salary increase, or some benefit, negotiate from a position of strength. Ask for a higher salary because of your achievements (which you describe) and not because your children are going to college. Being one of the "deserving poor" does not get you a raise in academe (or anywhere else).

Once you are on the job, you may have to initiate negotiating for particular benefits. Do not assume that good work alone will merit what you think you deserve. In most instances, if you need clerical help, more equipment, or whatever, you will have to ask for it and negotiate.

After any negotiating session is concluded, be sure that you have a summary of what was agreed upon in writing. You can write a letter or memo summarizing the agreement. Martha Tolpin suggests that such a memo cover the topics discussed and the conclusions reached, both positive and negative. She especially advises that people be very specific about time and money issues and adds that if your counterpart negotiator does not take the trouble to write you, your letter or memo will constitute the written record.[6] As suggested earlier, you can end such a memo with a statement such as "If I do not hear from you in the next two weeks I will assume that my understanding of our meeting is correct."

HANDLING DISCRIMINATION

Women do need to learn the same skills that men learn, but they also need to learn about the unique barriers that they as women will encounter. Women are not treated in the same ways as men are treated in the workplace. They get different reactions from other people and they need to know what these reactions are so that they can deal with them.

> If women...aren't prepared in advance for...[gender-] related problems on the job, they will be stunned at the first occurrence and have no relevant training to cope with the inevitable. Because white men have not been subject to subtle forms of discrimination, they cannot be expected to appreciate how different their attitudes are toward women business colleagues.[7]

Women are outsiders and therefore at a disadvantage in male-dominated organizations. All of us try to hire people like ourselves—the clone factor. We are all more comfortable with people like ourselves. Also, some men lack confidence or trust in women or have some level of anxiety about women. They may be unsure about what working with a woman is like or whether they—and the woman—can handle it. When men are uncomfortable and/or when they are threatened by women's achievements, their informal behaviors are likely to communicate their discomfort and, in turn, make women uncomfortable. For example, ignoring women's comments or interrupting them keeps women off balance. To the extent that women know and understand these behaviors, they can better deal with them, or at least not be devastated by them.

Pick your battles carefully. You can't raise every single issue of sexism (you'll go crazy if you try!). There may well be disagreements and disagreeable behavior on the part of some people, but not all of them are worth fighting about. Nevertheless, when things are very bad, they can't be ignored. Sherita Caesar, a Motorola executive, said succinctly, "If you won't tolerate an injustice from a friend or acquaintance, why should you take it from a work associate?"[8]

Behavior that makes women uncomfortable often makes them angry as well. However, reacting in an emotional or retaliatory manner is often not effective. Similarly, ignoring the behavior in the hope that it will go away is also ineffective because the lack of response is typically misinterpreted as approval or not caring about the behavior. Ignoring bad behavior does not make it go away; indeed, it may get worse.

Many women find it helpful to confront the behavior by specifically stating what they do not like and what they want to happen: "You and I are going to be working together for a long time. I'm uncomfortable when you refer to me as

'Sweetie.' My name is Mary, and that is what I want to be called," or, "Look, whenever I make a suggestion it's ignored, but when someone else makes the same suggestion, you react to it positively. I'd like you to pay attention to the suggestions I raise." Some women have responded lightly to sexist comments or jokes with words such as, "Uh-uh. That's a 'no-no.' That's sexual harassment."

These techniques are most effective when used the first time the behavior occurs, although they will also work later. If you are feeling angry and cannot easily separate your feelings from your behavior, it is often wiser to wait until you can react in a calm, collected manner.

Don't assume a paranoid attitude when bad things happen. Look for an alternate explanation such as inefficiency, for example. In real life, few plots occur; most people have neither the time, energy, nor ability to plot. It is easy to blame other people and outside factors or, conversely, to blame oneself. Instead, try to figure out what really went wrong. Talk to others about it in terms of what happened and what to do next.

Don't blame men as a group. They are not the enemy; sexism is. If you think you are being discounted, think of it as a challenge and try to figure out what you can do: where do you go from here? That's more productive than simple blaming.

Sometimes men will test women with aggressive comments; they may say things that are either deliberately nasty or inadvertently hostile. One way (not the only way) to respond is with humor. One woman who was referred to at a panel as "a lovely lady with whom I would hate to disagree" turned the tables when she referred to the speaker as "a handsome gentleman with whom I would hate to disagree." Responding to discriminatory comments with humor connotes strength, and often through humor we can communicate thoughts that would be far more threatening if they were communicated directly.[9]

Sometimes humor can be used to make women feel uncomfortable. Aggressive humor can define and ridicule the outsider(s), and thereby create bonds among those who share the laughter. One way to deal with aggressive humor is to pretend ignorance and lack of understanding. When a colleague tells a sexist joke, you can say, with a straight face, "I don't understand the joke. Would you tell it again?" There is nothing worse for a joke-teller than to have someone not "get the joke." You listen again, and then ask him (usually it's a "him") to tell it a third time, perhaps then asking him for an explanation. Typically the joke-teller either will decide you have no sense of humor or perhaps begin to understand that the joke is inappropriate. In either event, he is not likely to tell you that kind of joke again.

You can use a similar technique in responding to inappropriate questions or statements by taking them quite literally and responding in kind. For example, if a male colleague compliments you on your appearance during a professional presentation, you can thank him, and then immediately compliment him on how nice he looks or what a beautiful suit he is wearing.

Additional suggestions appear under "Sexual Harassment" on page 8.

PERSONAL PRESENTATION

The way in which one presents oneself affects the way in which colleagues and students make judgments. While it is tempting to say that one's dress and manner should not count and that one's work is what is really important—and in a better world this would be true—one needs to be aware of what is expected in dress and behavior so that one can make a choice as to how to respond. The problem is figuring out whether or how to play the game with regard to some superficial behaviors while preserving one's own integrity and sense of self in the more important areas. Cynthia Secor, director of Higher Education Resource Services (HERS) Mid-America, recognizes the twin and sometimes conflicting needs of personal expression and professional expectations and reconciles them by advising, "When you dress 'up,' think of yourself as being in professional disguise."[10]

Phyllis Saltzman Levy recommends that women should emulate some behaviors that white males engage in and explains why she believes certain other behaviors should be avoided:[11]

☐ Baking cookies for meetings. If others bring food to meetings, do the same.

☐ Answering the communal phone. If you do so, you will be asked to take messages and therefore give the appearance of being a secretary.

☐ Cleaning up after meetings. If you do it, you are proving that you like the role of tidying up. Leave when others leave.

☐ Taking notes for meetings. If asked to do so, you can say that you do not have the time to get the notes out to everyone.[12]

☐ Doing needlework in the presence of colleagues. The benefit of relaxation and enjoyment does not override the disadvantage of being viewed in a conventional and stereotyped female role.

☐ Using apologetic speech and qualifying statements ("This probably doesn't make sense"). If you sound incompetent and weak, you may be perceived that way.

☐ Presenting a "sweet" image by always smiling, nodding agreement, refusing to take a strong stand, using a "sweet" tone of voice when intending to sound firm.[13]

Levy also points out the danger of going to the opposite extreme:

> There is a difference between being feminine and acting unprofessional. Some women lose sight of their female identity. They buy into the white male system with even greater force and commitment than white males. These

women never smile, even at appropriate times. They are always very serious; there are times to be businesslike and times not to be. Be able to laugh. Do not take yourself too seriously. Do not start thinking of the opposite sex as the enemy. The richness of the female experience is worth maintaining. The objective is not to become a white male. The objective is to be able to function in a white male society.[14]

SELF-CONFIDENCE AND MODESTY

An eagle egg was lost and ended up being found by some chickens who raised the eagle. The eagle learned to peck at the ground with his head down. One day another eagle flew above, and the eagle on the ground sighed, "Oh, I wish I could fly like that!"

We create many of our own limitations. Because most of what we do is learned, we can learn many things we do not think we are "good at." We *choose* many of the behaviors we engage in. Many women have less self-confidence than their male colleagues; this, in turn, may make them more cautious about doing new things or taking risks. They doubt their own abilities and are less likely to set high goals, and they may be more fearful of failure than male colleagues.

Women have been socialized to be modest, to play down any attention to themselves. They may believe that it is "unladylike" to talk about their achievements. Women are supposed to "wait" until they are noticed. That simply doesn't work in academe or elsewhere. The American Psychological Association's "Survival Guide to Academe for Women and Ethnic Minorities" notes:

> Women and ethnic minorities...have been taught to be modest in presenting themselves. Further, they often have a lack of knowledge and confidence about the significance of their contributions. Women are less likely than men to attribute their successes to their own ability, and more likely to blame their failures on a lack of ability ...Awareness of the self-labeling trap is important....
>
> Self-effacement can affect how colleagues evaluate your successes and failures and can diminish your self-esteem and confidence. When presenting yourself to other faculty members, do not hide your achievements. There is no place for false modesty when preparing tenure documents. You should concentrate on conveying favorably your strengths, accomplishments, and contributions to the field, your department, and your university.[15]

If you don't tell anyone about a paper you published, they simply may not know about it. If you don't tell people about your ideas and achievements, they may begin to believe that you have none. To the extent that women are devalued, it is even more important for women than for men to display their achievements.

Yet because of their low self-esteem, some women may find it hard to believe in their own abilities. Even women who are confident about their abilities may have difficulty in openly talking about their skills and abilities; they see themselves as "bragging," and to the extent they have been taught to be modest, "bragging" seems unfeminine—even unnatural—to some women.

Some women act "girlish." Others, attempting to please, may smile excessively and try to be sweet, charming, and modest. These are mannerisms that do not give the impression of confidence and ability. Some people may think a woman who acts this way simply is not very bright. In many people's minds "girlishness," sweetness, and modesty are incompatible with intelligence. Showing less confidence is easily translated by many as being less competent.

Thus, self-deprecating remarks such as, "I'm not too good with statistics" are more likely to be heard as expressing a lack of competence and confidence rather than as expressing modesty about one's abilities. Indeed, because women often have less self-esteem and have been "trained" to be excessively modest (in contrast to men, who are "trained" to boast about their skills), women's "modesty" can be a hindrance; it can become a self-fulfilling prophecy or communicate to others that one is not competent.

Women's speech often has been described by linguists, communication specialists, sociologists, and feminists as generally being less assertive and more deferential. Women typically use more qualifiers ("Perhaps there is a likelihood..." and add tag questions such as, "It's hot, isn't it?" Their voices may go up at the end of a sentence and their statements may begin with apologies ("I'm probably wrong but..."). Men's speech, in contrast, is typically more definitive, strongly assertive, and often both competitive and combative in nature. Often the proposed solution for these speech differences is to help women learn to talk assertively, in the manner of men. While this can be helpful, it presents still another dilemma for women. Those who talk assertively may well be seen as "unfeminine" or, at worst, "castrating." No matter how women speak, their style may viewed by others as "not quite right." This is the difficulty in which women often find themselves: if they are perceived as "feminine," they are not seen as capable of functioning successfully in the world of work; if they act "less feminine," they are not perceived as capable but as "bitchy" instead. Thus, women often walk a fine line, between being "too feminine" or "too masculine."

Some researchers note that the less assertive style of speaking has positive value in fostering collaboration and encouraging others to participate.[16] A definitive statement such as, "We must start a new committee" puts listeners in a position of having to agree or disagree, and the status of the speaker may well influence how they respond. In contrast, a statement such as, "Well, what do you think? Would a committee be helpful?" allows people to express their opinions in a more

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collaborative manner and without regard to the status of the speaker. Ideally, women and men alike need to learn to speak in both styles—the "masculine" and the "feminine"—so that each person can choose whatever is appropriate for the particular situation.

LETTING PEOPLE KNOW HOW GOOD YOU ARE

Merit is obviously necessary for survival and success, but merit alone is not enough. Because women and the work they do is often either ignored or devalued, it is even more important for women than for men to be sure that others know how good their work is. Here are some suggestions that might be helpful.

Work to get on programs at professional associations. In addition to submitting individual papers, sometimes you can submit a complete panel for the program. Work on projects, committees, task forces, and reports with others as a way of increasing your visibility. If you have been asked to serve on too many committees and want to decline, explain why, and if possible, suggest the names of other women or men. If you have reason to believe that you have been selected because you are a woman, state clearly that there are other people who can represent women's concerns on the committee, and again suggest other people. Be sure to let the people you suggested know why you suggested them.

Do not apologize for yourself, any unique characteristics you have, or experiences you have had. Make an asset out of anything "different" from the male norm. For example, if you took care of a family before returning to school for your doctorate, talk about your motivation perhaps being stronger than that of students who may have gone on directly to complete graduate school.

When you have done good work—whether it is publishing an article in a prestigious journal, giving a presentation at a conference, or solving an institutional problem—be sure to inform your colleagues and especially your department chair. One way to do this is to send a short memo, "For your information," which encloses the article or describes what you did. Be sure that professional information is put into your personnel folder.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The few studies that have explored the extent to which women faculty members have been sexually harassed by other faculty members or administrators suggest that anywhere from 20 to 50 percent of women faculty members experience some form of sexual harassment from colleagues or administrators.

If this happens to you, talk to someone. The director of affirmative action, the head of a women's center, or the chair of a committee on women's concerns, as well as other colleagues, can often be helpful. Having a conversation is not the same as filing a complaint, and you may be able to get some good advice about how to deal with the situation.

Find out what your institution's policy is and what your options are. In almost all instances such behaviors are illegal, but understandably most people do not want to file a formal complaint within their institution or instigate a lawsuit. Fortunately, there are other options that may be helpful.

Speak up when sexual harassment happens. Some of the suggestions under "Handling Discrimination" on page 5 may be helpful. It is important that you communicate that you do not like the behavior. Say something like, "I don't like this behavior at all, and I want you to stop it." Labeling the behavior as sexual harassment may be helpful. When nothing is said, the harasser often believes, erroneously, that the woman is enjoying his behavior.

Keep records, such as a journal or notes, that detail what behavior occurred, when, where, witnesses (if any), how you responded, and what the harasser did next. Should you decide later to file a charge, these records can be used as evidence. Just as important, writing things down can help you sort out your feelings about what has happened and help you figure out what you want to do next.

Do not blame yourself. Women often wonder if they have "caused" harassment. It is not something that a woman causes; it is an action that the harasser has decided to take.

Write a letter to the harasser.[17] Many people have successfully stopped sexual harassment by writing a letter to the harasser. Usually the harasser stops harassing the writer as well as other women. The letter consists of three parts:

- ☐ Part one is a factual description—without evaluative words—of what has happened ("Last week you put your hand on my knee").
- ☐ Part two describes what the writer feels about the behavior ("I'm very upset about this," or, "I'm disgusted with you, and I want to throw up when I see you.").
- ☐ Part three consists of what the writer wants to have happen next ("I want your behavior to stop," or, "I want you to treat me with the respect that colleagues deserve").

The letter is delivered either in person or by registered or certified mail. The letter works in part because it is a private communication; copies are not sent to the department chair, dean, president, or the press. The writer keeps one copy for herself. In most cases, the harasser is surprised that his behavior is viewed this way, and he also may be fearful of what the writer is planning to do. Typically the harassment stops and the harasser says nothing. If he wants to discuss it or apologize, the writer should simply say something like "I'm not going to discuss it; I just want your behavior to stop." The letter can be used as evidence should it fail to stop the harassment and if retaliation then occurs. It is important to keep in mind that retaliation is prohibited to the same extent that sexual harassment is prohibited.

OTHER SEXUAL ISSUES

In seeking out informal contacts with male colleagues, be aware that friendly/professional behavior on your part may be misinterpreted by some men as a sexual overture. If you want to have lunch with a colleague, you may be able to defuse any sexual misinterpretation by referring to your boyfriend or husband, if you have one, or inviting two men or a man and another woman. Having lunch in places where you are likely to be seen by colleagues is also helpful. If you do this often in visible places and with different colleagues, the act of having lunch or dinner with someone may seem more ordinary.

Think twice before becoming involved in a sexual relationship with colleagues in your department, especially with senior colleagues. Should the relationship fail, it could have a negative impact on the tenure process, especially if there are bad feelings. If your relationship is known, it may affect the way in which colleagues and administrators judge your work. They may be more likely to believe that your good work was done by your colleague rather than by you. Remember that sexual "indiscretions" are usually forgiven men but held against women. Even the hint of a sexual relationship can undermine a women's professional reputation and reinforce others' beliefs that her sexuality is more important than her professional competence. Do not assume that a departmental relationship can be kept secret for very long.

INTERVIEWS

Interviews are often more stressful for women than for men for several reasons. To the extent that women have less self-confidence and esteem, they may feel uncomfortable and less prepared. While overtly discriminatory actions are relatively rare during interviews, there nevertheless may be real differences between the types of questions asked of men and of women. Men may be more likely to be asked open-ended questions such as, "How did you become interested in biochemistry?" This type of question allows the respondent to portray him or herself in the best possible manner by selectively discussing those items which are most flattering and impressive. In contrast, women may be more likely to be asked more direct and factual questions such as, "How many articles have you published?" or, "What courses have you taught?" These types of questions give a woman less opportunity to display herself in an impressive manner. Moreover, being asked factual questions can be a tense experience; at worst, it can be more like a grilling. To the extent that open-ended questions may relax an interviewee, that person may appear a more pleasant, more compatible potential colleague.

Knowing that different types of questions may be asked may alleviate some of the discomfort women might experience. Moreover, women who understand these dynamics can take the initiative and introduce their strong points, especially if their interview gives them little opportunity to "display" their strengths.

What if during a job interview someone asks if you have children? It is not only inappropriate but illegal. One can point out that it is illegal, but that may be difficult to do if you want the job. You can respond, "No [or yes]. Do you have children?" Some women who have been asked if they plan to have children and did not want to raise any doubt about their future have responded with downcast eyes and stated that they were sterile. When they became pregnant later, they talked about the wonders of modern medicine—a white lie which some may find offensive but which, it should be noted, is not about the applicant's qualifications but about an irrelevant obstacle to being evaluated fairly. Others who have children have responded to the underlying assumption that a woman cannot have children and perform well on the job. They have described the adequacy of their child care arrangements and their ability to maintain professional commitment.

Another strategy is to act puzzled: "I'm sorry, I don't understand what having children has to do with the job." And of course, one can also respond playfully, and perhaps with a smile and a small giggle, and say, "Oh, is this a test to see how I would react to an illegal question?" or, "You didn't really mean to ask that question, did you?"

WORKING IN THE SYSTEM

As outsiders, women often can see more clearly the flaws in the structure; they are faced with the constant tension of wondering, "How do I fit into the structure?" and, "How do I work to change the structure without risking rejection by the structure?"

Almost every woman needs to make continual decisions about how she fits into the system. She will undoubtedly be advised by some to avoid women's issues both politically and in the classroom. That may be a safer course, but doing so exacts a heavy price. One cannot move ahead and be content if one has denied important parts of oneself. Part of life is taking risks and accepting what comes with the choices you make. No one can move ahead or survive without taking some risks. If there are unpopular issues or subjects you want to deal with, you may need to do so if you are to be at peace with yourself. If you want to pursue women's issues, including women's studies, go for it.

There are a number of ways you can deal with unpopular issues in order to minimize damage to yourself. Developing specific strategies and allies can make the difference between a rocky but fulfilling career and a career that is dashed on the rocks.

If you work on women's issues on campus, develop another

area of expertise such as budgeting, faculty rights, or academic freedom.

Encourage men to support women's issues. Work for and with men: Where possible, seek out men who are more likely to be comfortable with women—men whose wives have a career, men who have daughters, or men who are nontraditional in their approach to life and work. These men can often be helpful in providing information, support, and advice.

Don't try to "act like a man." It's a dead-end game in which women can't succeed because they are not men. Be the kind of person you are.

Before bringing up an idea at a departmental meeting, discuss its feasibility with other members to get additional input and establish yourself as a productive member of the department. If the idea is inappropriate, it is better to learn this during an informal conversation than during a formal meeting.

When failure occurs (and everyone makes mistakes sometimes), figure out what went wrong and how the situation can be improved (what do you do next to retrieve it?). A good way to answer these questions is to talk to people about what you might do. After you have an idea of what makes sense to you, you can also seek out the person(s) involved, apologize if necessary, and/or ask for their advice on "Where do we go from here?" and/or explain what you plan to do to remedy the situation.

Watch how you label your behavior. If you label your behavior only as failure, you are more likely to damage your self-esteem. Norma Raffel at Pennsylvania State University always labels any "failure" as "a learning experience." This is a way to temper your anxiety and recover from the experience by dealing with it differently than if you simply label it as "failure." Do not lose sight of your strengths.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH STUDENTS

Both male and female students have gender-related expectations of their professors. They may expect women to be more caring and motherly than their male teachers. They may put more pressure on women faculty members for special treatment such as extending deadlines, and they may be angrier at a woman faculty member who refuses than at a male professor acting the same way.[18]

The double bind that exists for women faculty members with their male colleagues also exists with their students. At the same time that students may expect supportive behavior from female faculty members, they may nevertheless interpret such behavior as weakness, perhaps seeing it as "too feminine." But if a woman professor acts more assertive—like her male colleagues—she may be viewed as "too masculine."

The gender of a person affects the ways in which they are perceived, particularly in terms of competence and ability. Because women's behavior is often devalued—by faculty members as well as students—even when women faculty members act the same, their behavior may be viewed differently. Thus, a strong woman faculty member may be seen as rigid and controlling rather than intellectually rigorous and challenging. The devaluation of women by both women and men students may explain why women's teaching often receives lower evaluations than men's, as found in several studies. The devaluation by students can take the form of negative body language such as turning away, lack of eye contact, and other forms of inattentiveness. Statements made by women faculty members may hold less credence than those made by males and are more likely to be met with skepticism or disbelief. Thus, it becomes important for a woman faculty member, where appropriate, to let her class know of her achievements. It is often wise to do this at the first session of the class in order to combat devaluation.

The authority of a woman faculty member may be challenged more often and more intensively than that of a male faculty member, especially by some male students. Although most male students are respectful and receptive, a small but significant number will find it difficult to relate to a female professor. Indeed, sometimes male students will continually contradict a woman faculty member, regardless of the content of her words. One way to deal with this is to deflect the question to the class, rather than trying to restate your own position. If a student says something similar to "That doesn't make sense, everyone knows that..." you can say, "Well, what do the rest of you think about this?"

Sometimes a student may criticize you inappropriately, as in, "You are politicizing the class by talking about women's issues," and good teaching techniques (such as "Tell me why you believe that" or a sympathetic "It's hard for many people to talk about these issues") may fail. In such instances you may need to be aware that the comments may not be logical or subject to change through rational discourse because they may have a large emotional component. If the student is particularly aggressive, a flippant remark in some instances, such as "Ah! It will probably get worse" may be helpful as an indirect means of telling the student that the attack on the faculty member is not working.

CONCLUSION

All of the issues discussed here are public problems, not private ones. Although each of us often has to handle these issues and may even do so successfully, these issues will continue to be present and cannot be solved for everyone solely by individual actions which may enhance individual careers. Thus, it is important for those who are committed to equity to work specifically for changes that will address these issues for everyone. This might involve a wide array of actions such as

working on an institution's committee on sexual harassment, using women's caucuses in the disciplines or women's campus committees to ensure that questions are asked of candidates for office or employment to ascertain their commitment to women, or pressing the curriculum committee to ensure that scholarship on women is incorporated into existing courses.[19] It might mean joining a women's organization, or at the least, contributing money to those organizations that you believe can make a difference.

When we are concerned with the structure of academe (or society at large) there are probably four options we can choose. One choice is to flee, although where one would go to flee discrimination is questionable. A second choice is to withdraw psychologically into apathy or bitterness and not be involved in changing the institution. A third choice is to be a revolutionary, to try to tear down the entire existing structure and replace it, hopefully with something better. Not only is that almost impossible to do, but it also leaves us with not really knowing what the new structure would be and how it would operate. The last choice is that of trying to change society, inch by inch, bit by bit, painstakingly instituting change in whatever small measure one can. And that is precisely what people of good will have been doing since time immemorial.

Much has changed in academe during the last two decades, but much more is needed if we are to develop a society where men and women have options that are not limited by traditional notions about what is proper and improper. We have taken the first step of what will be a very long journey.

NOTES

1. Patricia Basset, "The Minority Female in Postsecondary Education: Challenges and Strategies," in *Women in Higher Education: Changes and Challenges*, edited by Lynne B. Welch (New York: Praeger, 1990), 238–45.

2. Women's Concerns Committee of the University Council on Affirmative Action, SUNY–Albany, *Women and Tenure at Albany, A Guide for Faculty*, 1987.

3. Some of these suggestions were described in a speech I gave, "Mentoring, or, Should You Put All Your Eggs in One Basket?" at the Association for Women in Science, First Annual Conference, Washington, D.C., June 7, 1991. For further information, see *Academic Mentoring for Women Students and Faculty: A New Look at an Old Way to Get Ahead* by Roberta M. Hall and Bernice R. Sandler (Washington, D.C.: Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges, 1983).

4. John W. Creswell, University of Nevada, *Faculty Research and Performance: Lessons from the Sciences and Social Sciences*, an Executive Summary, ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report 4, 1985).

5. Martha Tolpin, *Wo/man's Guide to Academe: Moving In, Moving Up, Moving Over*. Wellesley, Mass.: Higher Education Resource Services-New England, Cheever House, Wellesley College, 1981.

6. Tolpin, *Wo/man's Guide*, 23.

7. Betty Lehan Harragan, "Getting Ahead: Management Training for Women," in *Working Woman*, February 1984, 38.

8. *Graduate Engineer*, February 1991, 73.

9. See, for example, Regina Barreca, *They Used to Call Me Snow White but I Drifted* (New York: Viking Press, 1991).

10. Personal communication.

11. Phyllis Saltzman Levy, "Surviving in a Predominantly Male Institution," in *The Ph.D. Experience*, edited by Sue Vartuli (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1982), 54–56.

12. I would add that one can agree to do so, but make it clear that you have no intention of doing this routinely: "I'm sufficiently free of sex-role sterotypes that I actually can take notes, but next time it will be someone else's turn."

13. Levy, "Surviving in a Predominantly Male Institution," 55–56.

14. Levy, "Surviving in a Predominantly Male Institution," 55.

15. Publication still in press.

16. Roberta M. Hall and Bernice R. Sandler, *The Classroom Climate: A Chilly One for Women?* (Washington D.C.: Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges, 1982), 11.

17. The letter technique was pioneered by Mary Rowe at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. A detailed description appears in the *Sexual Harassment Packet* (Washington, D.C: Center for Women Policy Studies, 1983).

18. These faculty/student issues are discussed more fully in "Women Faculty at Work in the Classroom, or, Why it Still Hurts to Be a Woman in Labor," by Bernice R. Sandler (Washington, D.C.: Center for Women's Policy Studies, in press).

19. See *It's All in What You Ask: Questions for Search Committees to Use* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Women Policy Studies, 1988).

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